

Prophetic Strokes

A Clock Whose Hands Had Not Moved For Years Suddenly Strikes at Night

By F. A. MITCHEL

In the Hartz mountains stands the castle of Wertheim, though it is now a ruin. In the castle tower was a clock, which was said to be one of the first ever made. During the period when the castle was last inhabited this clock had long ceased to strike the hour. Its clumsy frame was still perched away up in the tower, so rusty that even a strong man could not wind it even if the weights were removed. The old baron remembered having heard it strike when a child, but he was sixty years old and the only one in the castle or in the neighborhood who remembered the sound of its bell. But it was even then like the death rattle in the throat of a giant.

Since that day the staircase in the tower ascending its four sides in frequent right angles some seventy feet had completely rotted away, leaving the clock on the strong floor that had been built for it.

Baron Ludwig Wertheim was the owner of the castle at the period of this story. He had but one son, below



"THAT'S NOT NEWS TO ME!"

whom there was no male heir to the title. Caspar was forty years old and his wife thirty-eight, and they had no children. This was a source of distress to the old baron, feeling, as he did, that with his son the title would become extinct. Since it was one of the oldest and most respected in the land those living in the vicinity felt the same regret.

One night when a bleak November wind was blowing those asleep in the castle and those at the base of the hill were awakened by a strange sound, a sound that thrilled them and filled them with wonder. They heard the stroke of a tower clock. To those on the hill it sounded close by. To those at the bottom it seemed to come from a distance. The only clock capable of creating such strong vibrations within a hundred miles was the one in the tower of Wertheim castle.

And what a sound it was! Some said that it seemed to them like the distant boom of a gun on a sinking ship, some that it was a knell, some like the anvil that summons mortals to prayer. All agreed that it was a dirge, and to all there were that hoarse wheezing and creaking that might be expected from long disused and rusty mechanism.

One, two, three! Then there was a silence, while the listeners counted the beating of their hearts, at the end of which the strokes were resumed.

But what a difference between the first and last series of beats! Instead of being funeral the second were joyous. Could those silvery tones come from the old clock in the tower? And yet what clock was there near by that could be heard so distinct, so vivid? None. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten! The strokes were counted by every person in the castle, beneath the castle and within hearing distance of the castle. They were heard by persons living ten miles away. These joyous strokes sounded differently to different persons. To some they were like the sound of wedding bells, to some the chimes of Easter, to others those which ring out at a christening.

Of all who heard them the old baron was the only one to interpret them. He counted the first strokes and when he heard the third knew that his brother, as he sometimes called the clock, had sent him a message. Then when the ten strokes that followed ended he sank into a restful slumber such as he had not known for years.

The next morning the castle yard was filled with people looking up at the tower and the clock above. There

was a babel of voices, some averring that a trick had been played upon them by some mischievous person who had climbed up to the clock and struck the bell, that it was superstition or imagination alone that led those who heard the sounds to attribute to them different intonations. One of these skeptics entered the tower at the bottom and looked up to determine if he could see any evidence left above as to how it could have been scaled. There was nothing but the four interior sides, showing marks here and there of where the staircase had been built against them. But even this man beat a hasty retreat, for while he stood gazing upward a piece of stone or mortar fell from above, landing within a few feet of him. He was too frightened to notice what it was, and no one else dared enter the tower.

Only the baron failed to discuss the cause of the old clock suddenly resuming the strokes that it had given for 200 years and had ceased to give for nearly sixty. But it was noticed that from that memorable night he, who had appeared youthful and vigorous for his years, began to show signs of decay. A cold storm in December brought on a chill, from which he emerged much weakened. In February he received a shock from which it was evident he would not recover.

One day his son entered the room where he lay with news that he hoped might rouse his father to rally. He announced that a child would be born to the house of Wertheim.

"That is not news to me," said the old man, and, turning over, fell into a sleep. Hours after this his daughter-in-law approached the old man's bed to receive his congratulations. He was still sleeping and so still that she became alarmed and called her husband. The baron was dead.

A great concourse of people attended the funeral of the man they loved so well. It was held in the chapel of the castle, and after the ceremony the body was lowered into a vault under the chapel door. Then the throng, having left many a garland on the replaced marble slab, withdrew.

That night it was rather in the small hours of the morning—those sleeping in the castle were awakened by a crash so loud that it was heard, like the mysterious sounds of the bell, for miles around. No one got out of bed to learn the cause of the noise; all lay shivering with an unaccountable dread. But with the first light of day many jumped out of bed and, putting on their clothes, went out into the court yard with a view to learning what had disturbed their slumbers. They huddled together exchanging remarks and looking about them to see if there was any evidence that any part of the old walls had fallen. But the walls were the same as the night before. Then one man went to the clock tower and looked inside. He saw a heap of old rusty iron and rotten wood. It was the clock.

The event, happening the night of the baron's funeral, strengthened the position of those who had averred that there was something more than human in the mysterious strokes which had been heard at the close of the previous year. Might not they have foretold the baron's death?

"How could that be?" protested the doubters, "since there were but three strokes and the baron did not die for four months?"

"Granted," was the reply. "But he died in the third month of the year. And, as to the clock, surely it gave notice of its own as well as the baron's death."

One thing puzzled all—the fact that the old man when his son announced to him that a grandchild would be born to him not only replied that it was not news to him, but manifested no interest that it might be a boy. Most of them believed that, whatever the message the clock had given, the baron alone was accorded a power to understand it.

In time it was announced that the child would be born in October. Then some one remembered that October was the tenth month in the year and that the number of the second series of strokes that had been given by the old clock had been ten.

At this discovery nearly every one who had doubted the supernatural behavior of the clock gave in, and those who did not admitted that if Baron Ludwig's grandchild should be a boy they, too, would be converted. On the 10th day of October a baby boy came into the world, and not a soul within the castle inclosure or among the retainers living roundabout but believed that the baron's "brother" had foretold the day of his death, of its own destruction, and that he would be blessed by the birth of a male child to perpetuate the family name of which he was so proud.

The astonishment at this prophetic announcement was nothing to that of one who was in the secret of the mysterious strokes. A young man with a mania for climbing, by throwing a looped rope over a projection of the tower, had succeeded in getting up to the clock and had made three sounds with a piece of iron, which he followed by ten more with a piece of wood.

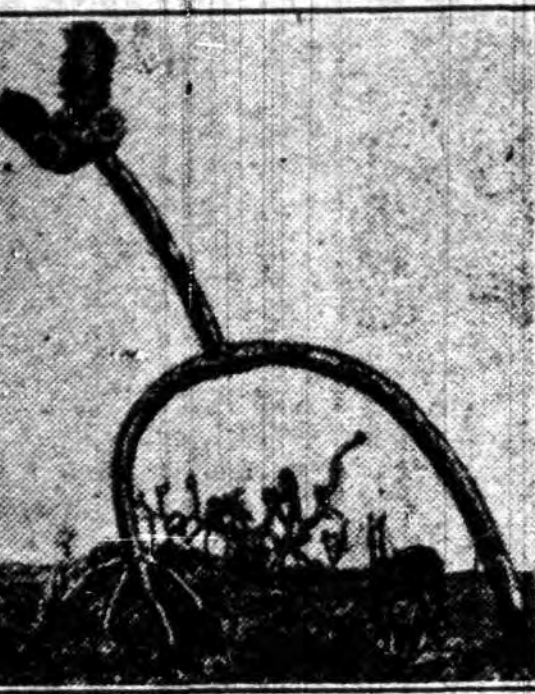
So astounded was he with the coincidences which subsequently occurred that he almost believed he had been sent to the tower by some guardian spirit of the baron to make the announcement to him of events that afterward occurred. When the first flush of wonder had died out the climber confessed that he had done the striking. Only a few believed him, and they accused him of witchcraft.

He left the place to save himself from being burned alive and never returned.

The child born at the time became the father of many children, most of them boys, and the title is still in existence.

For the Children

Giant Cactus That Resembles a Spur.



The great size to which the cactus plant grows in Arizona is clearly shown in the accompanying illustration. In which a horse is included for the sake of comparison. Of still more interest is the fact that this plant takes the form of a spur, due probably to the strong winds, which bent the plant over until its top touched the earth, after which a second root formed and a new growth started upward from the top of the arch so formed.

The Elephant.

Even in India the elephant is not used for going about as much as he once was. But for the durbar (the Delhi meeting at which King George was formally proclaimed emperor of India) the elephant was used by the thousand.

In crimson and gold trappings, carrying a howdah or pulling a carriage, he was a wonderful sight.

Here we see elephants only at the zoological gardens and at the circus. And aren't they interesting?

You may always identify this largest animal by its trunk. Its feet have five toes each, enveloped in an outer skin. And baby elephants have a tiny pair of milk teeth, which they shed just as human babies do their milk teeth.

The elephant's wonderful trunk is an extension of its nose, the nostrils being at the end of the trunk. Down at the end there is a fingerlike development, with which the elephant can pick up the smallest objects. This always seems very strange since the elephant is so large.

An elephant walks six miles an hour, and in case of great need he shuffles along at the rate of twelve miles, but he cannot trot.

While he climbs rather steep mountains, a ditch seven feet in width stops him short.

The ivory of which his tusks are made is very valuable. With these tusks he attacks an enemy.

King of the Castle.

King of the castle is a good game. One player gets on the top of a little hillock or mound of earth and proclaims himself "king of the castle," insinuating at the same time that his playmates are "little rascals" in the following couplet:

I'm the king of the castle!

Get down, you little rascals!

The boys stationed on the level ground resent this insult by endeavoring to pull or push the king from his elevated position, while he exerts his utmost efforts to maintain his station. The player who can contrive to dethrone the monarch of the hillock takes his place and keeps possession both of castle and title until some stronger competitor compels him to abdicate.

What Johnny Overheard.

Johnny was dozing in his father's library when he overheard this conversation:

"Hello, Fatty," said the Copybook to the Dictionary.

"Hello, Thinnny," retorted the Dictionary.

"You're a wordy person, Fatty," said the Copybook.

"You're an empty thing, Thinnny," said the Dictionary.

"Bound to have the last word, eh, Fatty?" sneered the Copybook.

"Need it in my business," said the Dictionary. And the Umbrella coughed so hard that it bent one of its ribs—Philadelphia Ledger.

Conundrums.

Why does the sun rise in the east? Because 'east makes things rise.

How do you know that some persons were evolved from the vegetable kingdom? Because many of them are still small potatoes.

Why is the Milky way in the sky? Because the cow jumped over the moon.

Why is a caterpillar like hot cakes? They both make the butterfly.

Naughty Willie.

Willie—Teacher licked me 'cause I was the only one who could answer a question.

Mother (frightened)—What was the question?

Willie—Who put the pin on teacher's chair?

The Airy Giraffe.

Said a pert little dog to a tall giraffe. "It isn't that easy to catch me."

But you took so much up that the neighbors laugh.

And say you are getting on all right.

The giraffe was annoyed, you could plainly see.

And sniffed as he made reply. "If you had a nice long neck like me you would do the same as I."

BLOUSE NEWNESS.

A Stunning Evening Model In Velvet and Silver Lace.



VELVET AND SILVER LACE BLOUSE.

A lovely combination of velvet and silver lace is to be found in the evening waist pictured. The foundation is of coarse silver net and the fichu draped bodice of heavy silver lace. The short kimono sleeves are edged with silver ball fringe. A heavy silver cord ornament studded with rhinestones through which is drawn the cyclamen colored velvet relieves the one tone effect and adds chic to the blouse. A new French feature is the side sash of silver net edged with ball fringe.

Eliot For Sex Franchise.

Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard university, is one of those who believe that sex hygiene should be taught in the public schools.

"The only alternative for education in sex hygiene," he declared in a paper read recently by Dr. Luther H. Gulick to the American School Hygiene association, "is the prolongation of the present awful wrongs and woes in the very vitals of civilization."

Dr. Eliot believes that to prevent the disasters to the young that arise from ignorance systematic instruction should be given in the processes of reproduction and the consequences that follow violations of the laws of nature. "The policy of science has failed everywhere," he urged. "If any one protests that this educational process will abolish innocence and make matter of common talk the tenderest and most intimate concerns in human life let him consider that virtue and not innocence is manifestly God's object and end for humanity."

For the Summer Girl.

The lingerie gown for the summer will not be of handkerchief or any of the fine lines if it is strictly up to date. Cotton voile in different degrees of fineness has taken the place of lin-



OF ENGLISH EYELET EMBROIDERY.

en in the dressmaking world this season. Embroideries that play so conspicuous a part on these costumes is of a mingled heavy and light weave. But as there must be an exception to every rule the lingerie gown sketched is composed almost entirely of heavy but very handsome English eyelet embroidery.

Fountain Designed by a Woman.

Miss Blanche Nevins, the sculptor who made the statue of General Muhlenberg in the Revolutionary hero group in the capitol at Washington, has a fountain in her back yard in Lancaster county, Pa., that has attracted much attention. It is supported by the statues of four women, each prominent in the history of the country, one of them being Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy.

A Gift With a Sting.

What do you think of the man who presented his wife with a set of diamonds when married, each diamond representing a year of her life, and who has since given her one on each birthday, exacting that she wear them all at once? The worst of it is that he explains to every one of his friends and acquaintances just how he has managed the brilliant gift giving.



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Broken Lot Shoe Sale.

Every broken lot and discontinued line of women's, children's and misses' shoes in the Bamberger Store at a reduced price. This is our half yearly sale. Come and help yourself to these good things. Buy enough shoes to last you a year.

WOMEN'S SHOES—Of patent colt and gun metal calf—kid and cloth tops—mostly every size and width in the lot—regular \$3.50; special, a pair.....2.05

WOMEN'S SHOES—Genuine black buckskin button shoes, with Cuban heels and wing tips—hand sewed welted soles—regular \$4.00; special, a pair.....2.85

WOMEN'S SHOES—Vici kid comfort lace shoes, made for solid comfort. Hand sewed welted soles—no seams across joint—\$2.50 grade; a pair.....1.50

WOMEN'S SHOES—Gun metal calf, vici kid and patent colt lace shoes, in sizes 2 1/2 to 4—regularly \$2.50 per pair; this sale, special, a pair.....1.15

WOMEN'S SLIPPERS—A lot of manufacturers' samples. Over 200 styles. Patent colt, vici kid, velvet and suede; size 4 mostly; \$1.50 to \$4.00 values, at.....1.15

WOMEN'S SLIPPERS—Strap sandal slippers, made of patent colt, with hand sewed turned soles—regularly \$1.25 per pair; this sale, a pair.....75c

WOMEN'S SLIPPERS—Felt comfy slippers and felt Juliette in all colors and shapes; usually \$1.00 to \$1.25 per pair; special price, per pair.....60c

FELT SLIPPERS—For misses and children, red felt—felt soles—warm and noiseless. Sizes 6 children's to 2 misses—regular 50c. a pair; special at.....29c

MISSSES' SHOES—Button shoes for misses and children. Black suede, gun metal and Russia calf—welted soles—regular \$1.75 to \$3.00 a pair, at.....1.50

GIRLS' JULIETTES—Red felt Juliette with red fur trimmings. Sold regularly at 75c. 85c. and 95c. per pair; special sale price, per pair.....50c

CHILDREN'S SHOES—Sample shoes in size 4 mostly. Patent leather and vici kid—turned soles—regularly worth 75c. per pair; special at, per pair.....30c

BOYS' SHOES—Black storm shoes, high cut, on "Foot Trainer" last. Sizes 10 to 13—regularly \$2.00 per pair; sale price, special, per pair.....1.50

BOYS' SHOES—Lace shoes of good, strong Robson calf, dull tops, extension soles. Sizes 9 to 13—regular \$1.25 per pair; special price, per pair.....95c

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